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WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

BIOGRAPHY AND SELECTIONS
FROM HIS WRITINGS

WRITTEN ESPECIALLY

FOR SCHOOL READING

BY

THOMAS ARKLE CLARK

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Illustrated

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WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

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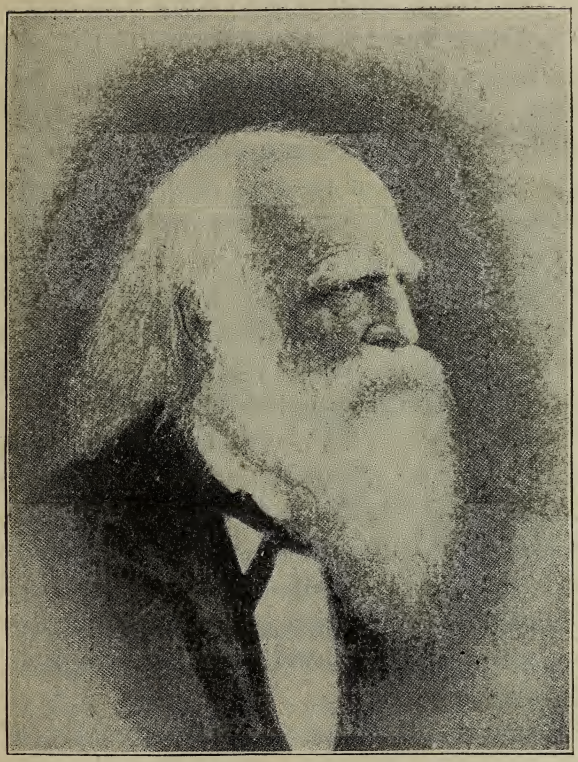
WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.
1794—1878.



WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

It is not usual for two great poets to come from the same stock, so that it is interesting to know that Bryant, as well as Longfellow, was descended from John Alden and Priscilla Mullens who came over in the Mayflower and whose story we may read in Longfellow's Courtship of

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Miles Standish. There was a Stephen Bryant on the Mayflower, too, and the poet can also trace his descent directly to him.

Dr. Peter Bryant, the father of the coming poet, was a physician, an active man, fond of reading, well versed in his profession, and educated beyond the average man of his day. He read a great deal of poetry, and was a very excellent critic. He was interested in affairs, and was for many years a member of the Massachusetts State legislature. He was not remarkable for his attention to business details, it is said, and did not succeed in making, or at least in keeping, any large amount of money.

His wife, however, was of a different temperament, being economical and industrious in the extreme. Besides doing her own work, as most New England women at that time did, she wove cloth and made the clothing for her entire family, taught her children to read and write, and was a ministering angel to all the sick in the neighborhood.

William Cullen was the second child of Dr. Peter Bryant and was born at Cummington, Massachusetts, November 3, 1794. He was a bright child but was delicate in health and had a head very much larger than a young child should have. His father tried to correct this deformity by dipping the child's head into very cold water every morning. Whether this treatment was the correct one or not, it is hard to

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say, but at any rate the boy outgrew the trouble.

To show that he was an unusual child his biographer tells us that he walked when he was a year old, and that he knew all of his letters by the time he was eighteen months of age. He started to school at an early age in a little wooden schoolhouse on the banks of a small stream that flowed through his grandfather's farm. He was fond of school, and among other things he soon became a good speller. He liked geography, but he could not get on well with the catechism which he was asked to learn. He liked games, too, and it is said that he was a fast runner and played ball well, though he was not very vigorous or muscular.

It was at the Friday afternoon exercises when he was a very little boy that he recited before the minister, the teacher and his father one of the first poems that he had written. We can imagine that it was no easy matter for the sensitive bashful child to stand up before these dignified and critical men and speak his own poem, but he did it bravely and received no little praise for it. For turning into verse the first chapter of Job, when he was about ten years old, his grandfather gave him a ninepence. He continued to write verses throughout his childhood, some of which were published in the local papers and brought him no little fame.

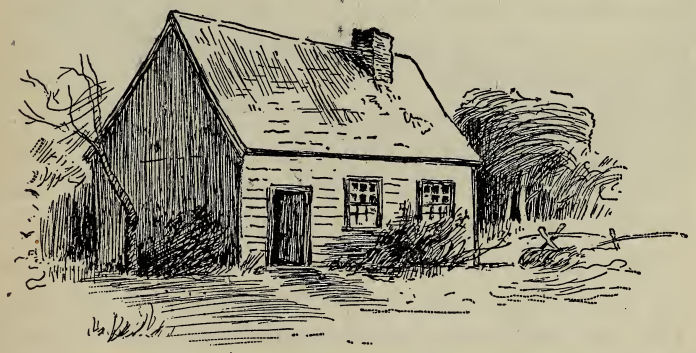
When he was but thirteen he wrote a satire nearly five hundred lines in length directed

against the Embargo Act which was passed during Jefferson's administration. His father was so proud of his young son's efforts that in 1808 he had the poem published. It received considerable praise and for the work of so young a boy was truly remarkable; it showed, as did all the poems of Bryant no matter when written, careful attention to both rhyme and metre. The poet was, however, not at all proud of these earlier verses of his when, in later years, he gave himself seriously to poetry; for they were in style unlike the simple direct method which he employed later and were so full of high-sounding stilted words that today they seem almost funny.

Cullen was a very religious little boy and was brought up with a good deal of strictness. As soon as he could speak, he says, his mother taught him the Lord's Prayer and other children's prayers. One of the things for which he used to pray regularly as a child was that he might be able to write poetry well. He became discouraged in this petition after a few years, however, and for some reason omitted it; but perhaps the earnest wish to become a great poet had no small influence in helping him to accomplish his purpose.

When he was twelve years old his father decided to give him an education, so he sent him to his uncle, the Rev. Thomas Snell, at North Brookfield, to study Latin. In eight months he

had learned enough of the language to enter the sophomore class at Williams College, and he was then put under the instruction of Rev. Moses Hallock at Plainfield, Massachusetts, whose house was known as the "Bread and Milk College." Here the boy took up the study of Greek. Mr. Hallock had prepared a great many boys for college and, though he taught them well, he fed them frugally, charging but a dollar a week for board and tuition because he said he could afford to do it for that and it would not be right to charge more.



THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE ON THE BRYANT FARM.
(By permission of the New England Magazine.)

In 1810, when he was sixteen years old, Bryant entered the sophomore class at Williams College. He was a tall, slender young man, wide-awake, quick, with a reputation for being stronger than he really was. He was attractive in his appearance at this time and was much admired for his physical skill.

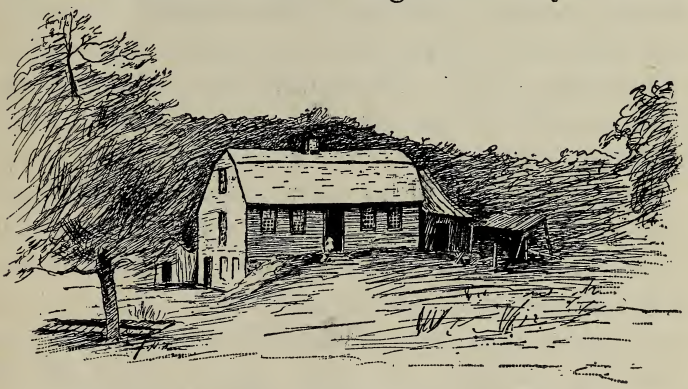
Williams College did not then have a high standing; for the work of the entire institution was done by four men, one for each class, and was so poor that Bryant said the graduates of that day would scarcely have been prepared to enter college today so great has been the change. As a result the poet was not happy here; he was dissatisfied with almost everything, and at the end of two terms he asked to be dismissed that he might enter Yale.

Much to his disappointment his father found the expense too great and decided that he could not afford to send his son to college. It was always a regret to Bryant that he could not have a finished college course. He felt that many things which he might have learned, had he been permitted to go on with his course, would have been of the greatest service to him in the real work of his life. After his short experience at college he returned home. Here he read most of the books in his father's library, not omitting the medical works of which there were a great many. He was especially fond of poetry and became thoroughly familiar with Pope, Burns and others.

His time was not all taken up with reading, however. It was a poor family in which he lived and he did his share of the hard work on his father's farm, though it must be confessed that while doing it he was planning for himself a different and a more congenial life. It was

while working on the farm, soon after his return from college, that he wrote Thanatopsis, the poem which alone would have made him a great poet. He usually showed all that he wrote to his father, but this time he did not show it to anyone, and it was not until six years later that his father discovered it and sent it to the publishers of the North American Review.

The Bryant farm was not a large one, and there were four other strong active boys in the



THE HOUSE IN WHICH THANATOPSIS WAS WRITTEN.
(*By permission of the New England Magazine.*)

family, so that Cullen knew that his help was not needed. He soon began to look about for another means of earning a living. It did not occur to him that he could make his living by writing, though he would have been only too glad to do so; at first he thought of following his father's profession, but the hardships of the life and the meager returns led his father to advise a contrary course. Becoming interested in

politics, therefore, and in affairs of state he turned his attention to the study of law.

In 1811 he entered the law office of Mr. Howe, of Worthington, a small village only a few miles from Cummington. He did not like the work he had in this office; for he found too few companions and the town was small and uninteresting. According to his own statement it consisted largely of a blacksmith shop and a cow shed. He was too shy and bashful to go much into society, so that the most of his leisure was taken up with the writing of poetry rather than with the study of law. He would have liked to go to Boston, but it was too expensive, and so after talking the matter over with his father, they compromised, and he went instead to Bridgewater where his grandfather lived. He liked it here and studied hard. However, he did not entirely give up writing poetry.

In August, 1816, he was admitted to the Bar, and the question of where he should work at once presented itself. He still had a desire to go to Boston, but he was too bashful, and finally he decided to settle in Plainfield, a village near the town where he was born, which at the time had perhaps one hundred inhabitants. He stayed there but eight months when he concluded that it was no place to become a great lawyer and that he must go somewhere else. Leaving Plainfield for Great Barrington, he went into partnership with a young attorney whose prac-

tice was worth perhaps twelve hundred dollars a year. Within a few months he had bought out his partner and carried on the business alone.

He still thought seriously of being a poet, for the work of the law was irksome to him and the methods and practices of the profession were not such as always pleased him. It was a great pleasure to him, then, when in 1817 he received a request to contribute to the North American Review. About this time his father found in a drawer of his son's desk the manuscript of "Thanatopsis" and of "An Inscription upon the Entrance to a Wood" and was so pleased with them that he at once took them to Boston and showed them to his friend, Willard Phillips, editor of the North American Review. Soon after, Thanatopsis was published and Bryant was asked to contribute regularly to the North American Review, a request which pleased him exceedingly, for it seemed an opening to him into the literary world.

He was married in 1821 to Miss Fairchild, a young woman whom he had met while he was visiting in Great Barrington. During his courtship she was the subject of many poems among which was "O, Fairest of the Rural Maids." His home life was always a happy one, his wife being the inspiration of much of his best work.

In 1822 he was honored by being asked to deliver a poem before the society of Phi Beta Kappa of Harvard University and for this occasion

he wrote "The Ages," a poem which was considered to be the finest ever written for that society. It was soon after published in a small volume with seven other poems. The success of this volume turned his attention strongly toward literature. He wrote more than he ever had before and in three years contributed perhaps two dozen of his best poems to the United States Literary Gazette, of New York. It was about this time that he wrote "The Death of the Flowers," a beautiful poem in memory of his young sister who had lately died. It may be interesting to those who expect some day to win a fortune through their writings to know that for this poem he received the sum of two dollars.

He did not give up the law immediately, because he was afraid to rely wholly upon his pen; he knew how badly writers were paid and how hard it is sometimes for them to find a market for what they have to sell. In 1825, however, he made up his mind to risk literature as a profession and moved to New York where he became editor of the New York Review and Atheneum Magazine at a salary of a thousand dollars a year. This amount, he said, was twice what he had ever made as a lawyer.

He enjoyed his new work thoroughly, for in the life which he lived in the city he found a freedom which he had not known in the practice of law, and he became closely associated with friends who were more agreeable and with

a society more stimulating than any he had known before. While writing for the Review he increased his income by lecturing on English poetry and by teaching in one of the schools of the city. For several years, also, he gave lectures on mythology which were well received.

Though any number of noted men, including Longfellow, Halleck, Poe, and others, contributed to the Review, yet it did not prosper. It had a varied career; it was united first with one journal and then with another in the vain hope of prolonging its life, but it finally died for want of support.

While wondering what he should do, now that his connection with the Review was severed, Bryant was offered a temporary position with the New York Evening Post, a position which he was glad immediately to accept. Very soon afterward he was permanently employed and bought a one eighth interest in the paper. In 1829, on the death of Mr. William Coleman, the editor in chief of the Evening Post, Bryant was tendered the vacant position. At this time he bought a still larger interest in the paper and thus laid the foundation of his later fortune. For fifty years he worked on the Evening Post; when he entered upon the work the American newspaper was in its infancy; when he laid down his pen, it had developed into a power far beyond anything that could reasonably have been expected of it.

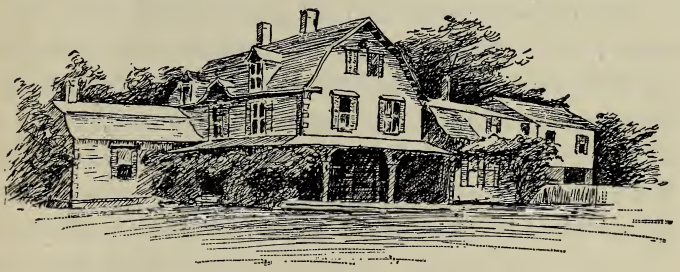
In this work, as in all others that he had undertaken, he was no loiterer; he gave all his time to the paper; he was the first one at the office in the morning, working with the greatest care that his reputation as a poet might not suffer through what he did as a newspaper writer. His editorials were the strongest attraction in the paper, and though they seldom filled more than a column, they were characterized by such simplicity, directness, clearness and force, that they attracted a wide class of readers.

In 1831 he published a second volume of poems. He brought out this edition also in England where he was under very great obligations to Washington Irving. Mr. Irving brought the poems before the attention of a reputable publisher, and by writing a short introduction to the work succeeded in attracting considerable attention from the English people. Mr. Bryant never realized a large amount, however, from this publication, three hundred dollars being perhaps a generous estimate of his returns.

One of the great delights of Bryant's life was to travel. The first long journey that he took was in 1832 when he came to western Illinois to visit his brother John. It was at the time of the Black Hawk War, and he met, on his journey, a tall awkward looking young man who was in charge of a company of troops marching to the scene of conflict, and who interested the

poet by his droll and characteristic stories. It was the young Abraham Lincoln whom he did not see again until thirty years later when, as a candidate for the presidency, he addressed a political meeting over which Bryant presided.

It was at the end of this same year that Bryant made his first trip to Europe, remaining abroad two years and visiting France, Italy and Germany. He was charmed by the beauty of the landscape of France and attracted most of all in Italy by the clear sky.



THE BRYANT HOUSE AT CUMMINGTON.
(By permission of The New England Magazine.)

On his return from Europe he found the Evening Post in a very bad financial state. It was necessary for him to give his whole time and attention tó the management of the paper so that he had no time for poetry, little opportunity for leisure, and could concern himself with nothing but work. His whole efforts were directed toward getting the paper on a paying basis again He lived simply and worked as hard as he was able. He was often discouraged during the struggles of these years, and would have been glad

to give up newspaper work and to devote himself to poetry, but his affairs were in such condition that this was impossible. He even thought at one time of coming to Illinois where his brother John lived, to try his fortune in what was then a very undeveloped country. He stuck to it, however, and in a few years succeeded in recovering the ground he had lost while in England, so that the paper later yielded him an income of from ten thousand to seventy thousand dollars a year.

From the time when he was a little boy, exploring the hills around his native town, he had loved nature and the country, so that in 1843 he bought for himself a country house at Roslyn, a little village on Long Island overlooking the Sound. It was a beautiful mansion surrounded by a small tract of land and overhung on every side by huge trees. Here he managed for two or three days of every week to steal away from the toil of the city and to rest quietly at his own fireside. This house might have been called the "Poet's House" because in it he never allowed himself to do any work for the newspaper with which he was connected, but concerned himself only with poetry which he loved best. When asked once to seek the quiet of Roslyn to prepare an article for the New York Evening Post, he resented the suggestion strongly and insisted upon doing it in the office where all his work for the newspaper had been executed.

It was a very simple life that he lived. While at Great Barrington he had found himself in frail health; he had not inherited a vigorous constitution from his ancestors, and when he went to New York he found it necessary to give up all stimulants, even tea and coffee. In order to keep himself in good health he took regular exercise, ordinarily an hour and a half every morning before breakfast. He rose at five, or at the latest at half past five in the morning, ate the simplest food, did a great deal of manual labor, and so prolonged his life considerably beyond the allotted three-score and ten years. Even up to the time of his death he continued the most vigorous exercise every day. During his residence in New York he lived quite three miles from his place of business, and until he gave up work entirely he insisted upon walking this distance twice a day.

He did not practice law long enough to become noted as an attorney, yet he did develop, even in the few years that he was in the work, a distinct ability as an orator. He was eloquent and was much in demand as a speaker. On the death of Cooper, of Irving, and of Halleck, he delivered addresses in commemoration of these literary men that are models of style. He did not often try to speak extemporaneously, but when he had time wrote out his addresses and committed them to memory. He said that although he had relied upon his memory a great many

times that it never failed him but once, and that was near the close of his life when he was tired by hard work.

Though he had been brought up a Federalist, politically Bryant was a Democrat. He was never a violent abolitionist, but when it became necessary for him to write upon the subject of slavery, he attacked it with vigor and openness. He was always outspoken and never let his business interests interfere with the full expression of what he thought to be right. Though for more than a half century before the public as an editor, he never held a public office worthy of the name. True, he had been tithing-man and justice of the peace at Great Barrington, but these offices were too insignificant to mention. He did not care for public office, but felt rather that his great work was to influence public opinion. In characterizing himself he said that the three most irksome things for him were to owe money, to ask a favor, and to seek an acquaintance.

In 1864, when he was seventy years of age, the Century Club of New York, of which he was a member, gave a dinner in his honor. Bancroft, the historian, presided, and a large number of prominent men of the country were present. Poems were read by Holmes, Bayard Taylor, and others, and congratulations were received from Whittier, Lowell, Longfellow, Edward Everett, and scores of other great Ameri-

cans. When he was eighty years of age there was a general celebration of the event all over the country, and he was presented with a costly vase in commemoration of his great literary attainments.

In 1866, hoping that the health of his wife might be benefited by the change, he bought the old farm at Cummington on which he had been born, and fixed it up beautifully. It was without avail, for the change did not benefit Mrs. Bryant and she died on July 27th of that year. Her death was a severe loss to him for she had been his most helpful critic and his constant companion. She was the only intimate friend he ever had, he said, and when she was gone he had no other.

After the death of Mrs. Bryant the poet felt the need of some active work to keep his mind employed and he turned to the translation of Homer. He worked regularly at this translation, doing at least forty lines a day. He was occupied upon the Iliad until 1870 when the work was published. Although he recognized the fact that he was perhaps too old a man ever to finish it, he immediately began upon a translation of the Odyssey. The fact of his great age and his realization of the few years that were left to him, caused him to hurry more than he would have been likely otherwise to do, so that within less than two years he had completed the Odyssey. It was published in an attractive form,

and from this translation, together with the first one that he had made, he realized more profit than had ever come to him, perhaps, from all the rest of his poetry. Within a short time his profits accruing from the royalty which he received from these translations amounted to more than seventeen thousand dollars.

In 1876 he was asked to compose a poem for the opening exercises of the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia. He realized that he was not a poet to write for occasions; his inspirations did not come to him always at his bidding. In addition to this fact, too, he thought himself too old to assume so great a responsibility, and he declined the invitation. The poem was afterward written by Bayard Taylor.

Bryant continued to work almost up to the time of his death. On May 29, 1878, he delivered an address at the unveiling of a statute of Mazzini, the Italian patriot. He was tired, but insisted on walking some distance with his friend Mr. James Grant Wilson. As they were ascending the steps of the latter's house he became suddenly dizzy and fell, striking his head on the stone step. He lingered for two weeks and died on June 12, 1878.

It was the ending of a noble simple life. He had been a man who had never sought notoriety; all the fame that ever came to him came without his working for it. He was pure and steadfast in his character, virtuous, and reliable in

all that he did, and his life might well be held up as an example of how men ought to live. The ceremonies were in All Soul's Church where he had worshiped for many years, and in the beautiful month of June, as he had wished for himself, they laid him to rest in the graveyard at Roslyn.

As a poet Bryant, as much as any American, desired constantly to teach a moral lesson. His purpose was to elevate his fellowmen and to make them better by keeping before them high ideals. Sometimes we feel that he has been too insistent in his purpose and might better have been content simply to please rather than to instruct. He is a meditative poet, and frequently these meditations have to do with death. So often is this true that he has sometimes been called the Poet of Mortality, and it has been urged that the most he has written may well be named Thanatopsis,—a view of death. But he shows us other moods; his verse is filled with a love of nature and not seldom runs over with the joy of doing right. He wrote very few long poems and he showed a maturity of thought at eighteen years that had not weakened at eighty. The first great poet of America he will always remain among her most noted literary figures.

Thomas Arkle Clark,
University of Illinois.

SELECTIONS FROM WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

THANATOPSIS.

I.

To him who, in the love of Nature, holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty; and she glides
Into his darker musings with a mild,
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware.

II.

When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder and grow sick at heart;
Go forth under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teaching, while from all around—
Earth and her waters, and the depth of air—
Comes a still voice:

III.

"Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more

In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall
claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again;
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix forever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock,
And to the sluggish clod which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon.

IV.

"The oak
Shall send his roots abroad and pierce thy mold.
Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone; nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world, with kings,
The powerful of the earth, the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past
All in one mighty sepulchre.

V.

"The hills,
Rock-ribbed, and ancient as the sun; the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between,
The venerable woods, rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks [all,
That make the meadows green, and, poured round
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste,

Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
Through the still lapse of ages.

VI.

"All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom. Take the wings
Of morning, and the Barcan desert pierce,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods,
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound
Save its own dashings: yet the dead are there;
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep: the dead reign there alone.

VII.

"So shalt thou rest; and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one, as before, will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth, and their employments, and shall come
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glides away, the sons of men—
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron, and maid,

And the sweet babe, and the gray-headed man—
Shall, one by one, be gathered to thy side
By those who in their turn shall follow them.

VIII.

"So live that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams!"

THE PLANTING OF THE APPLE-TREE.

I.

Come, let us plant the apple-tree.
Cleave the tough greensward with the spade;
Wide let its hollow bed be made;
There gently lay the roots, and there
Sift the dark mold with kindly care,
And press it o'er them tenderly,
As round the sleeping infant's feet,
We softly fold the cradle-sheet;
So plant we the apple-tree.

II.

What plant we in this apple-tree?
Buds, which the breath of summer days
Shall lengthen into leafy sprays;

Boughs where the thrush, with crimson breast,
Shall haunt and sing and hide her nest;
We plant, upon the sunny lea,
A shadow for the noontide hour,
A shelter from the summer shower,
When we plant the apple-tree.

III.

What plant we in this apple-tree?
Sweets for a hundred flowery springs
To load the May-wind's restless wings,
When, from the orchard row, he pours
Its fragrance through our open doors;
A world of blossoms for the bee,
Flowers for the sick girl's silent room,
For the glad infant sprigs of bloom,
We plant with the apple-tree.

IV.

What plant we in this apple-tree?
Fruits that shall swell in sunny June,
And redden in the August noon,
And drop, when gentle airs come by,
That fan the blue September sky,
While children come, with cries of glee,
And seek them where the fragrant grass
Betrays their bed to those who pass,
At the foot of the apple-tree.

V.

And when, above this apple-tree,
The winter stars are quivering bright,
And winds go howling through the night,

Girls, whose young eyes o'erflow with mirth,
Shall peel its fruit by cottage hearth,
And guests in prouder homes shall see,
Heaped with the grape of Cintra's vine
And golden orange of the line,
The fruit of the apple-tree.

VI.

The fruitage of this apple-tree,
Winds and our flag of stripe and star
Shall bear to coasts that lie afar,
Where men shall wonder at the view,
And ask in what fair groves they grew;
And sojourners beyond the sea
Shall think of childhood's careless day
And long, long hours of summer play,
In the shade of the apple-tree.

VII.

Each year shall give this apple-tree
A broader flush of roseate bloom,
A deeper maze of verdurous gloom,
And loosen, when the frost-clouds lower,
The crisp brown leaves in thicker shower.
The years shall come and pass, but we
Shall hear no longer, where we lie,
The summer's songs, the autumn's sigh,
In the boughs of the apple-tree.

VIII.

And time shall waste this apple-tree.
Oh, when its aged branches throw
Thin shadows on the ground below,

Shall fraud and force and iron will
Oppress the weak and helpless still?
What shall the tasks of mercy be,
Amid the toils, the strifes, the tears
Of those who live when length of years
Is wasting this little apple-tree?

IX.

"Who planted this old apple tree?"
The children of that distant day
Thus to some aged man shall say;
And, gazing on its mossy stem,
The gray-haired man shall answer them:
"A poet of the land was he,
Born in the rude but good old times;
'Tis said he made some quaint old rhymes,
On planting the apple-tree."

TO A WATERFOWL.

I.

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

II.

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

III.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean side?

IV.

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and the illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

V.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

VI.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

VII.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

VIII.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

SONG OF MARION'S MEN.

I.

Our band is few, but true and tried, our leader
frank and bold:
The British soldier trembles when Marion's
name is told.
Our fortress is the good greenwood, our tent the
cypress-tree:
We know the forest round us, as seamen know
the sea;
We know its walls of thorny vines, its glades of
reedy grass,
Its safe and silent islands within the dark
morass.

II.

Woe to the English soldiery that little dread us
near!
On them shall light at midnight a strange and
sudden fear;
When, waking to their tents on fire, they grasp
their arms in vain,
And they who stand to face us are beat to earth
again;
And they who fly in terror deem a mighty host
behind,
And hear the tramp of thousands upon the hol-
low wind.

III.

Then sweet the hour that brings release from
danger and from toil!

We talk the battle over and share the battle's spoil;
The woodland rings with laugh and shout, as if a hunt were up,
And woodland flowers are gathered to crown the soldier's cup.
With merry songs we mock the wind that in the pine-top grieves,
And slumber long and sweetly on beds of oaken leaves.

IV.

Well knows the fair and friendly moon the band that Marion leads,—
The glitter of their rifles, the scampering of their steeds.
'Tis life to guide the fiery barb across the moon-lit plain;
'Tis life to feel the night-wind that lifts his tossing mane:
A moment in the British camp,—a moment, and away
Back to the pathless forest before the peep of day.

V.

Grave men there are by broad Santee, grave men with hoary hairs,—
Their hearts are all with Marion, for Marion are their prayers.
And lovely ladies greet our band with kindliest welcoming,

With smiles like those of summer and tears like those of spring.
For them we wear these trusty arms, and lay them down no more,
Till we have driven the Briton forever from our shore.

THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS.

I.

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sear.
Heaped in the hollows of the grove the autumn leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust and to the rabbit's tread.
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

II.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves: the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.

The rain is falling where they lie; but the cold
November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely
ones again.

III.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished
long ago,
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the
summer's glow;
But on the hill the golden-rod, and the aster in
the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook in au-
tumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as
falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone from
upland, glade, and glen.

IV.

And now, when comes the calm, mild day, as
still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their
winter home;
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard,
though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of
the rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers whose
fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the
stream no more.

V.

And then I think of one who in her youthful
beauty died,—
The fair, meek blossom that grew up and faded
by my side.
In the cold, moist earth we laid her, when the
forest cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a
life so brief;
Yet not unmeet it was that one like that young
friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with
the flowers.

THE SONG OF THE SOWER.

I.

The maples redden in the sun;
In autumn gold the beeches stand;
Rest, faithful plow! thy work is done
Upon the teeming land.
Bordered with trees whose gay leaves fly
On every breath that sweeps the sky,
The fresh dark acres furrowed lie,
And ask the sower's hand.

II.

Loose the tired steer, and let him go
To pasture where the gentians blow;
And we who till the grateful ground,
Fling we the golden shower around.

III.

Fling wide the generous grain; we fling
O'er the dark mold the green of spring.
For thick the emerald blades shall grow
When first the March winds melt the snow,
And to the sleeping flowers, below,
The early bluebirds sing.

IV.

Fling wide the grain; we give the fields
The ears that nod in summer gale,
The shining stems that summer gilds,
The harvest that o'erflows the vale,
And swells, an amber sea, between
The full-leaved woods—it's shores of green.

V.

Hark! from the murmuring clods I hear
Glad voices of the coming year—
The song of him who binds the grain,
The shout of those that load the wain,
And from the distant grange there comes
The clatter of the thresher's flail,
And steadily the millstone hums
Down in the willowy vale.

VI.

And strew with free and joyous sweep
The seed upon the expecting soil,
For hence the plenteous year shall heap
The garners of the men who toil.
Strew the bright seed for those who tear
The matted sward with spade and share;

And those whose sounding axes gleam
Beside the lonely forest stream
  Till its broad banks lie bare;
And him who breaks the quarry ledge
  With hammer blows plied quick and strong,
And him who with the steady sledge
  Smites the shrill anvil all day long.

VII.

Sprinkle the furrow's even trace
  For those whose toiling hands uprear
The roof-trees of our swarming race,
  By grove and plain, by stream and mere;
Who forth, from crowded city, lead
  The lengthening street, and overlay
Green orchard-plot and grassy mead
  With pavement of the murmuring way.
Cast with full hands, the harvest cast,
For the brave men that climb the mast,
When to the billow and the blast,
  It swings and stoops, with fearful strain,
And bind the fluttering mainsail fast,
  Till the tossed bark shall sit again
  Safe as a sea-bird on the main.

VIII.

Fling wide the grain for those who throw
The clanking shuttle to and fro,
In the long row of humming rooms,
  And into ponderous masses wind
The web that, from a thousand looms,
  Comes forth to clothe mankind.

Strew, with free sweep, the grain for them,
By whom the busy thread
Along the garment's even hem
And winding seam is led;
A pallid sisterhood, that keep
The lonely lamp alight,
In strife with weariness and sleep,
Beyond the middle night.
Large part be theirs in what the year
Shall ripen for the reaper here.

IX.

Still strew, with joyous hand, the wheat
On the soft mold beneath our feet,
For even now I seem
To hear a sound that lightly rings
From murmuring harp and viol's strings,
As in a summer dream.

X.

Scatter the wheat for shipwrecked men,
Who, hunger-worn, rejoice again
In the sweet safety of the shore,
And wanderers, lost in woodlands drear,
Whose pulses bound with joy to hear
The herd's light bell once more.

XI.

Freely the golden spray be shed
For him whose heart, when night comes down
On the close alleys of the town,
Is faint for lack of bread.
In chill roof-chambers, bleak and bare,

Or the damp cellar's stifling air,
She who now sees, in mute despair,
  Her children pine for food,
Shall feel the dews of gladness start
To lids long tearless, and shall part
The sweet loaf with a grateful heart,
  Among her thin, pale brood.
Dear, kindly Earth, whose breast we till!
Oh, for thy famished children, fill,
  Where'er the sower walks,
Fill the rich ears that shade the mold
With grain for grain, a hundredfold,
  To bend the sturdy stalks!

XII.

Strew silently the fruitful seed,
  As softly o'er the tilth ye tread,
For hands that delicately knead
  The consecrated bread—
The mystic loaf that crowns the board,
When, round the table of their Lord,
  Within a thousand temples set,
In memory of the bitter death
Of Him who taught at Nazareth,
  His followers are met.
And thoughtful eyes with tears are wet,
  As of the Holy One they think,
The glory of whose rising yet
  Makes bright the grave's mysterious brink.

XIII.

  Brethren, the sower's task is done;
The seed is in its winter bed:

Now let the dark-brown mold be spread,
To hide it from the sun,
And leave it to the kindly care
Of the still earth and brooding air,
As when the mother, from her breast,
Lays the hushed babe apart to rest,
And shades its eyes, and waits to see
How sweet its waking smile will be.
The tempest now may smite, the sleet
All night on the drowned furrow beat,
And winds that, from the cloudy hold,
Of winter breathe the bitter cold,
Stiffen to stone the mellow mold,
Yet safe shall lie the wheat;
Till, out of heaven's unmeasured blue,
Shall walk again the genial year,
To wake with warmth and nurse with dew
The germs we lay to slumber here.

XIV.

Oh, blessed harvest yet to be!
Abide thou with the Love that keeps,
In its warm bosom, tenderly,
The Life which wakes and that which sleeps.
The Love that leads the willing spheres
Along the unending track of years,
And watches o'er the sparrow's nest,
Shall brood above thy winter rest,
And raise thee from the dust, to hold
Light whisperings with the winds of May,
And fill thy spikes with living gold,

From summer's yellow ray;
Then, as thy garners give thee forth,
On what glad errands shalt thou go,
Wherever, o'er the waiting earth,
Roads wind and rivers flow!
The ancient East shall welcome thee
To mighty marts beyond the sea,
And they who dwell where palm-groves sound
To summer winds the whole year round,
Shall watch, in gladness, from the shore,
The sails that bring thy glistening store.

ROBERT OF LINCOLN.

I.

Merrily swinging on briar and weed,
Near to the nest of his little dame,
Over the mountain-side or mead,
Robert of Lincoln is telling his name:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Snug and safe is this nest of ours,
Hidden among the summer flowers.
Chee, chee, chee.

II.

Robert of Lincoln is gaily dressed,
Wearing a bright black wedding-coat;
White are his shoulders, and white his crest,
Hear him call in his merry note:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,

Look, what a nice new coat is mine;
Sure there was never a bird so fine.
Chee, chee, chee.

III.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
Pretty and quiet, with plain brown wings,
Passing at home a patient life,
Broods in the grass while her husband sings:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Brood, kind creature; you need not fear
Thieves and robbers while I am here.
Chee, chee, chee.

IV.

Modest and shy as a nun is she;
One weak chirp is her only note;
Braggart and prince of braggarts is he,
Pouring boasts from his little throat;
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Never was I afraid of man,
Catch me, cowardly knaves, if you can.
Chee, chee, chee.

V.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,
Flecked with purple, a pretty sight:
There as the mother sits all day,
Robert is singing with all his might:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Nice good wife that never goes out,

Keeping house while I frolic about.
Chee, chee, chee.

VI.

Soon as the little ones chip the shell,
Six wide mouths are open for food;
Robert of Lincoln bestirs him well,
Gathering seeds for the hungry brood;
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
This new life is likely to be
Hard for a gay young fellow like me.
Chee, chee, chee.

VII.

Robert of Lincoln at length is made
Sober with work, and silent with care,
Off is his holiday garment laid,
Half forgotten that merry air:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Nobody knows but my mate and I,
Where our nest and our nestlings lie.
Chee, chee, chee.

VIII.

Summer wanes: the children are grown;
Fun and frolic no more he knows;
Robert of Lincoln's a humdrum crone;
Off he flies, and we sing as he goes:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
When you can pipe that merry old strain,
Robert of Lincoln, come back again.
Chee, chee, chee.

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